

**To:** Harrison, Melissa[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]; Card, Joan[Card.Joan@epa.gov]; Ostrander, David[Ostrander.David@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Calanog, Steve[Calanog.Steve@epa.gov]  
**From:** Ruhl, Christopher  
**Sent:** Wed 8/19/2015 8:15:24 PM  
**Subject:** Re: NEED APPROVAL-Media responses

Melissa-

I think these Q/As are outside of AC. I am forwarding to Ostrander and Joan Card.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 19, 2015, at 2:00 PM, Harrison, Melissa <[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov](mailto:Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov)> wrote:

Hey guys-working with the EOC/R8 to clear some media questions. Below are draft responses approved on our end. Let me know if you have any edits. Thanks! Melissa

**Is EPA aware of water buildup inside the Sunnyside Mine? Is there any estimate for the volume?**

Yes. The Sunnyside Gold Corporation, pursuant to its mining permit and an agreement with the State of Colorado, installed bulkheads in the American Tunnel in several locations in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The American Tunnel drained the Sunnyside Gold Mine workings during the mine's operating years. When the bulkheads were installed, water elevations rose in the mountain and flooded the Sunnyside Gold mine workings. EPA understands that the water levels in mine pool have been stable for several years. The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) would be a good resource for additional information and estimates on volume.

**Does the agency have any concerns about a potential spill from Sunnyside?**

We have no information indicating an immediate risk of a release from the Sunnyside Mine. EPA will be working with our partners at DRMS to evaluate the Gold King Mine release and its impact on conditions in the area to determine if additional measures are necessary to address potential discharges.

**Were the actions taken at Sunnyside responsible for water that was coming out of Gold King Mine?**

The relationship between the water in the Sunnyside Gold Mine and other mines in the area is a complex topic. Many of the mines in the area either intersect the same geologic structures and/or are in close proximity to the same structures. The DRMS has extensive knowledge and details on Sunnyside and other mines in the area, and that information has been the subject of extensive discussion and review with EPA and the Animas River Stakeholder Group (ARSG) over the last several years.

**What is EPA's response to ARSG's claims that the Agency did not discuss or collaborate on the Gold King Mine?**

EPA disagrees with this assertion. ARSG co-coordinators and attendees at ARSG meetings were provided with information and were asked for input on EPA's findings and the conceptual approach for planned work at the Red and Bonita and Gold King Mines through in-person meetings, presentations at public meetings, and email correspondence over the past year.

EPA has been a regular participant in monthly ARSG meetings and site tours, and we will continue to use those as opportunities for communication and dialogue with local partners as we move forward.

**What will EPA be doing to make sure that the mines in the Upper Animas basin are safe?**

EPA will be working with our partners at DRMS to evaluate the Gold King Mine release and its impact on conditions in the area to determine if additional measures are necessary to address potential discharges.

Melissa J. Harrison

Press Secretary

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